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ABSTRACT

Developing an aesthetic theory of advertising, this paper offers the premise that advertising is a ritual, that it provides cultural roles, and that it reinforces people's perceptions of their common experiences. The paper discusses advertising and advertising art as a process that both draws from and is sustained by general culture while serving to make that culture commercially recognizable. The paper introduces the phenomenon of "grouping" (using symbols in expressing cultural interrelationships), indicates how ritual is created in advertising, and shows how grouping works to subdivide the cultural marketplace. Next, the paper examines how grouping is employed as an artistic tool in the creation of advertising art. In conclusion, the paper suggests that an aesthetic theory of advertising can be used as an instrument for evaluating how well an advertising artist communicates. (RL)

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ADVERTISING AND ADVERTISEMENTS:

THE SIMPLE ART OF GROUPING

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ADVERTISING AND ADVERTISEMENTS:

THE SIMPLE ART OF GROUPING

Studying advertising is like looking at the head of Medusa. To analysts and critics, the subject has an almost obsessive fascination. But because advertising is so pervasive and culturally ingrained, we are often unable to completely see it and all its snake-like strands. So we apply discretion and peek at it, or its shadow, each from our own particular angle.

This essay will offer another glimpse at the Medusa of advertising by developing an aesthetic theory of advertising. Borrowing from the work of Schudson, Goffman, Carey and others, this paper will begin with the premise that advertising is a ritual, that it provides cultural roles and reinforces our perception of our common experience. It will demonstrate that advertising and advertising art are a process that both draws from and sustains itself at the well of general culture, while at the same time serves to make culture commercially recognizable. More important, this essay will suggest how ritual is invited and effected through a phenomenon called "grouping."

Grouping is the foundation of this aesthetic theory of advertising, and because advertising must function as part of the larger marketing process, this essay will also show how the phenomenon works at the level of cultural subdividing that is market segmentation. Next, the paper will examine how grouping is employed as an artistic tool in the creation of advertising art. Finally, it will be suggested that an aesthetic theory of advertising can be used as an instrument for evaluating how well an advertising artist communicates.

It will be beyond the scope of this paper to show how individual images, values or emotions are grouped to attract target audiences in specific advertisements. However, whether we look at advertisements as isolated artifacts

or at advertising art as an aesthetic process, we must ground our theories in advertising's social and economic contexts. The fundamental intention behind advertising is to provide information upon which natural man makes commercial decisions.[1] Culture supplies the raw material for communication. Grouping articulates the form of culture in advertising.

In an unpublished paper sociologist Michael Schudson says that advertising should be studied within its social, cultural and economic contexts. As an institution advertising helps producers and consumers understand their roles in an economic society. Schudson calls this "capitalist realism."[2] Advertising provides parables of living in a capitalist world. Moreover, advertising socializes a commodity. It may give it a materialist value or a consumerist (price) value, but more likely, it will inject the commodity with a fetishistic value that is derived from the product in its social context, such as snobbism.[3]

Another sociologist, Erving Goffman, adopts the perspective that advertising and its role should be viewed in terms of dramaturgy. Advertising, Goffman says, acts as a presenter of social ideals and instructs people in how to perform as social actors. In this capacity advertising serves to maintain the status quo, but more important, elevates the status quo to a level of ritual. Goffman calls this process "hyper-ritualization."[4] As an institution, advertising distills, streamlines and caricatures social actions. Through advertising, a consumer learns not only what to buy but how to act. By providing examples, advertising invites participation.

Carey, too, likens communication to ritual.[5] He says that communication, of which advertising is a part, is a process--a process of ordering experience. Communication is synonymous with culture because communication is a symbol <u>of</u> and <u>for</u> reality. We cannot communicate, Carey argues, without also performing a ritualistic act, maintaining society and redefining its shared beliefs, fellowship and commonality. Communication is a form of human communion, and

Carey believes we must see it in that context.

Market segmentation--concretizing orders in culture

Culture is the universal reservoir of shared beliefs and shared emotions, group experience, needs, wants, artifacts and art which we draw upon for communication. At one and the same time, culture is both an amalgamation and a set of atomized segments. It is an amalgamation in Carey's sense of amassed and ritualized commonness, a primordial soup that humans use as an elixir for interaction. The marketer, however, makes a distinction between culture, the common bonding agent and well of human experience, and culture, the set of groups of people. While the advertiser-as-artist draws upon the former culture for ideas to attract publics, the advertiser-as-marketer first examines the latter culture to determine who those publics are. The marketer cannot afford to see culture or society as homogeneous. He maintains that mass culture is heterogeneous and composed of smaller, identifiable segments of people. Once discovered, these more crisply outlined groups of folks can then be said to be relatively homogeneous. Kotler would say that they are clusters and represent "natural market segments."[6] At the level of clusters, the marketer can say that one segment of people has shared wants or needs that are not the same for a second segment of people, although both groups are linked by common culture.

Kotler defines marketing as the management of exchange processes.[7] In an exchange there is a reciprocal transfer of value between an organization and a consumer. The organization meets a customer's needs or wants by providing a product or service that provides satisfaction. The consumer, in turn, exchanges money for the actualization of his perceived need or want.

In advertising art a similar exchange takes place. Later in this essay we will see that there is reciprocity in the commercial information environment as well. But the value that is exchanged between the advertiser-marketer and the viewer-consumer is not material. Rather, the value exchanged is

perceptual energy that previous to the marketing communication was only potential energy.

Market segmentation is the concretizing of orders in culture through a process of grouping. The bases for grouping may be geographic, demographic, psychographic or behavioristic. But whatever method or combined methods of grouping that are used to segment larger culture, the outward evidence of this process of grouping is evident in advertising and advertisements. Through market research, the advertiser determines the segments of people likely to purchase particular products or services. Then, in target marketing the marketer-advertiser selects those groups that the company can serve most effectively, devises advertising campaigns to reach those people and creates advertisements that are designed to articulate the messages of the marketing mix. In this sense advertising is part of a system that is designed to transfer utility and property rights from one person to another. It is an effect of society rather than a cause, which complements the holistic perspective of Carey and others.[8]

In targeting certain groups of people for persuasive messages, Kotler says that a firm has three possible strategies. It may decide to use undifferentiated marketing and try to attract the largest part of the market with one offer and one marketing mix. If its resources are not large, the firm may choose to use concentrated marketing and go after a narrow market segment with the ideal offer. If the competitive environment suggests it, the firm may use the most common approach today and employ differentiated marketing, deciding to go after several market segments with different offers and marketing mixes for each.[9]

But whatever strategy is chosen, it is essential that we understand that the marketing impulse no longer starts at the top of the marketing hierarchy with the manufacturer. Rather, marketing begins at the bottom with the consumer,

or better stated, with that group of consumers who share common preferences in the form of needs or wants, no matter whether those preferences may be homogeneous, diffused or clustered. The advertiser-as-marketer says that his role is to group those individuals as efficiently as possible by common needs or wants, discern how those needs or wants can be made physically manifest in a product or service, and communicate that information to his employer, the manufacturer.

This new marketing orientation is fundamentally different from the old production orientation. Consider the beer industry as an example. In the archaic, production way of thinking, the brewer sold one product. He gave little thought to trying to differentiate his product from competitors, except by quality. His thinking was that, basically, all beers were alike, except his, which was noticeably, but not demonstrably, better. His advertising assumed that, with constant repetition of the message and name, eventually everyone would recognize his brand and try his product. The belief was that every single consumer would find his brand superior, once the consumer was coaxed into trying it. So the sole persuasive approach and marketing campaign used in that brewer's advertising was, "Buy this beer!"

Today, the beer industry lives and dies on the new marketing orientation. Few brewers, even small, regional manufacturers, sell only one brand of beer. Market researchers, using the principle of market segmentation or grouping, determined that the market, which previously had been understood to be undifferentiated, had changed and become differentiated. Within the larger market of all beer drinkers, there were identifiable groups of people who desired different returns from their beers, either in terms of physical properties or images. So, instead of having just one beer, a premium, a brewer now usually offers five products—a super premium, a premium, a light, a popularly priced beer and an import. For the advertiser it means that his role is more critical. Because

the brewer has begun to focus on market segments, the advertiser has to design messages targeted for clearly delineated groups of people. Advertising has begun to differentiate beers on the basis of information and imagery, not on brand name alone. Now, a potential beer consumer can look at a specific advertisement and the message should reflect a design gestalt that is the manifestation of the marketing mix. The advertisement's artwork is the signifier of the population grouping.

Defining the simple art of grouping

More than anything else, advertising is the simple art of grouping for mass media. It is simple in its intention—to provide market information to sell a product or service. It is simple in Carey's sense in that it defines our fundamental commonness by showing how we are interrelated directly through our culture.

Advertising is an art in that it must be intuitively understood by the perceiver. The communication must be unambiguous with a snap of a priori revelation. It is a simple art in that it demands uncomplicated visual fields. Because he often must communicate with and convince mass audiences, the advertiser must rely on simplicity in his choice of artistic forms and how he composes them.

Grouping is the method by which simplicity and art are effected. Grouping implies the choice of images and forms, as well as their arrangement within a visual or compositional field. The psychologist and art historian Rudolph Arnheim has studied the psycho-physiological responses that viewers experience when looking at visual fields. From his research he has concluded that grouping consists of choosing and arranging forms either by their similarity or proximity in visual fields.[10] The advertising artist performs this task by selecting and composing images or visual details because of their similarity to and mutual reinforcement of each other, as well as their ability to support the cultural link and persuasive intention that is fundamental in any advertisement. Further-

more, the artist will often place these carefully selected images and visual details in close proximity within the compositional field, because their physical immediacy more sharply focuses and simplifies the communication.

This same grouping by similarity and proximity is the foundation of one of the market researcher's statistical tools. A researcher will plot all accumulated data from a market survey on a graph. Then, in order to find those groups of people that are market segments and potential target markets for the advertiser based upon shared wants or needs, the market statistician will draw a line of regression through that arrangement of data on the graph. This line of regression, the simplest line possible combining all the relevant data and populations, is nothing more than a grouping by similarity and proximity.

Arnheim has described art as the discovery of the simplest visual order or grouping within the constraints imposed by environments.[11] He maintains this ordering process is evident in both inorganic and organic systems. Using Newton's rule that nature is pleased with simplicity, Arnheim looks at the experiment of water seeking its own level. He asks us to conceive of a beaker with a glass partition dividing the vessel into two compartments. On one side there is more water than on the other. But when the glass partition is removed, there is a movement of liquid from the higher side to the lower, a process called tension reduction. In other words nature seeks equilibrium in the form of the simplest order (one water level) given the constraints (volume of water and shape of beaker).

Arnheim then likens this physical example to art and visual perception. He says that the perceiver attempts to find the simplest order or pattern of visual forces in a field in which there could be many potential groupings and conflicting orders. It is the artist's responsibility to visually articulate that simplest of orders. But simplicity alone is inadequate and artistically counter-productive.

Any work of art needs a structural theme, which provides vitality for the order and gives it meaning, and the artist attempts to compose a design or composition that strikes a working balance between the simplest order possible within the constraints of that theme.

The visual pattern the artist creates, Arnheim believes, will be duplicated in the viewer's mind on a one-to-one basis. The points of attraction in the composition will be perceived, transferred and recreated in a visual field in the viewer's brain. So, it is critical that the artist understand that the visual movement or order that he choreographs into his artifact has a relative energy level; that this energy level will have to be reconstructed by the viewer.[12]

In communication parlance we could say that the artistic process is both the encoding of a composition and the decoding of that ordering in a visual field in the viewer's brain. Art is a process because it demands both artifact, the product of the artist or communicator, and the viewer-receiver. Art is more than the mental ordering of the artist. It is more than the artifact. If it is designed at all to be meaningful to others, it needs the viewer's willing perception and consumption to complete the communication process.

Because advertisers labor in a commercial environment, they must follow Arnheim's advice that in such circumstances, "There are good reasons for keeping a structural theme as simple as possible and the expense of energy at a minimum."[13] The energy composed into an advertisement, if it is well designed, if it is artistic, will elicit an equal amount of energy in perceptual response from the viewer. To prevent the viewer from avoiding an advertisement due to his perceived exhaustion if he has to match the artist's effort with his added effort, the advertising artist must keep the energy level or entropy of his artifact low.

<u>How the advertising artist employs grouping</u>

How then does an advertising artist create simple art? For one thing he

can keep the number of visual elements to a minimum. The smaller the number of elements a designer has to order into a composition, the quicker and easier it is to order them. Similarly, the smaller the number of elements in a composition, the less chance for unbalanced grouping and communication error. Finally, the fewer the elements in a composition, the more immediately striking, quickly perceived and intuitively understood is the design or advertisement by the viewer-consumer.

This design rule should be applicable to all media, but take a look at how it works in full-page magazine advertising. First, the artist uses an attractive device to grab the viewer's attention, usually an illustration. A few milliseconds after that in information processing time, the designer has to sustain attention by establishing the worth or credence of the visual arrest. A headline or title will often be used to provide that flesh. In order to lead the viewer into the body copy, the artist will use a third graphic element, a subhead or subtitle. Then, there is nothing left to add in this common composition except a graphic period, usually a silhouette illustration of the product package, a corporate slogan or a signature.

Four visual elements, then, often constitute the simplest possible order in many magazine advertisements, given the constraints of competing advertisements and editorial matter, and the necessity of effectively transmitting commercial information and imagery. Next, the advertising artist can combine design principles to inject artistry into the composition and illuminate the commercial theme. He uses the principle of dominance to ensure that at least one visual element attracts attention to the advertisement. He applies contrast, with its strong polarities and razor-sharp divisions, to avoid ambiguity. The artist employs harmony to demonstrate the shared relationships between visual elements, and the principle has a reciprocal effect on the designer because it forces him to stress simple commonalities.

At first, the design principle of proportion may seem to run counter to the argument for simple grouping. To be sure, the advertising artist avoids the easy proportions of 1:1, 1:2 or 1:3 because they are too predictable, and because they are so obvious, they make designs static and unattractive. Instead, the artist tries to mimic what classical Greek and Renaissance artists called a natural proportion--a golden rectangle or golden mean. Arnheim would explain this 2:3 or 3:5 proportion in another way. He would say that it is a natural proportion because it reflects a tension reduction or balancing of external forces, the simplest order given the constraints of nature.

The designer also applies the rule of simple grouping in the use and preparation of illustrations in advertising. He tries to keep the number of people, things and visual vectors to a minimum. When choosing a method of creating perspective within a two-dimensional frame, for instance, the advertising artist opts for a simple, linear variety, the perspective of classical art. He avoids Cubist interpretations because such perspective has multiple viewing angles as its base, and if it can be perceived, it is only through delayed, mental reordering.

In designing illustrations the advertising art uses the same editing methods as the photojournalist, since both have to be concerned with information overload and economy of space. The graphic designer uses the camera angle that provides the greatest amount of information, yet which compacts the meaning into the smallest amount of space. He uses only significant detail, those items of visual information that most efficiently tell the story. He edits out extraneous, ambiguous material either by choosing a different camera angle or by placing the subject in a different environment. In advertising, where the artist has greater design freedom because he is creating allusion and image rather than capturing historical fact, he can airbrush unnecessary detail.

Simplicity extends even further. The designer usually composes two people

within an illustration in such a way that there is a minimum of space between them. Too much empty space can split the frame and lead to conflicting centers of interest. In advertising art, the designer only wants one center of interest. Moreover, he often places it near the visual middle of the frame. That way, the illustration can withstand a variety of croppings, which makes it adaptable to a greater number of media.

This placing of visual elements upon or equidistant from compositional axes is called symmetrical design, and in advertising art the designer tends to prefer symmetry. But the allegiance to symmetry goes beyond the ordering of subjects within an illustration alone. The graphic artist usually makes the entire magazine advertisement symmetrically balanced on a page, and the choice is rational. Symmetrical design is easy to compose. Each side is a mirror image of the other. Often, the sensitive designer will provide slight asymmetrical variations within portions of the composition for visual arrest, but he will balance the overall design by ordering elements upon compositional axes. In symmetrical design there is less that can go wrong. There is less chance that the form will interfere with, subvert or dominate the message.

Indeed, symmetrical design provides other benefits. It exudes dignity and elegance. It imparts an air of solidity and substance to a product or message. No doubt, the advertising artist uses symmetrical composition too much. Yet the timidity is due to self-imposed regulation. The designer uses symmetrical design too often due to fear; fear that the asymmetrical alternative is too risky, too consciously "arty," too complicated for mass audiences.

Advertising art versus fine art

Artwork in advertising is usually a combination of verbal and visual elements, with the visual more than likely used as the attention-getting and audience-selecting device. In turn, the artwork must be seen in the context of Art in

general. While some would call the art in advertising a non-blood relative of Art, the procreator of the sublime,[14] it would be counter-productive to separate advertising art from the family of all Art. Both advertising art and fine art seek to persuade, and both contain elements of compromise.

The art in advertising has been defined as ritual made real.[15] It has also been called "the official art of capitalism."[16] In this view advertising functions as a magical system.[17] In addition to utility, we must also buy beauty, power, success or social respect, and advertising provides these magical properties in the imagery of art.

The art in advertising has also been defined as commercial art, or art that facilitates commerce. In this sense the term "commercial art" has come to have a pejorative meaning for some. Purists suggest that there are two forms of art--commercial art, which deals with money and profit, and fine art, which does not.

In order to avoid that categorical value judgement, I have used the term "advertising art." It is specific to a genre, yet it is spared any connotations that arbitrarily separate commercial art from other forms. "Advertising art" is an artistic process of grouping, and advertisements are the artifacts, the physical result of coordinating the segmenting process of grouping people with the artistic process of grouping visual elements.

Advertisements usually are not fine art. Moreover, while we wish all could be classified as good art, too often the art in advertising is plebian, tasteless or overworked and hackneyed. At those moments it is awkward to suggest that there is an aesthetic theory operating in advertising art. But, Dewey warns us against "turning to aesthetic canons of 'fine art' for clues to the experience of art as art, because this takes art 'outside' experience."[18] Dewey constantly refers us to the social context of art and the culture within which artists create.

Advertising art must be evaluated in terms of its commercial, selling

intention, as part of a cultural ritual that formalizes consumption and behavior. Both advertiser and consumer share in the ritual and find meaning in it by performing their respective roles. Advertisers are successful when they communicate the shared culture to consumers as fundamentally as possible. Advertising art works not because it imposes alien images. It works because advertising artists draw their images from the same universal well of culture and experience as fine artists, although they may choose different images and group them in other ways. Advertising artists know that, ironically, the cultural link forged in the artwork of an advertisement usually is more important than the product advertised, since consumers often purchase an image before a tangible.

Why advertisements can fail as fine art

When advertising art does fail as fine art, it is often due to a problem involving perceptual time. While advertising art, through grouping, can provide the imagery and composition that invite participation in the ritual of persuasion, purchase and material and psychic satisfaction, the same culture that provides the elixir for consumptive ceremony also provides an antidote. This inhibitor is perceptual overload. It is the kind of environmental constraint, to which Arnheim alludes, that the advertising artist must try to balance in the composition. The viewer is hurried and has little time for the individual perceptual response needed to complete the communication process. Sometimes, the viewer just misses the invitation to participate in the ritual.

The art scholar and critic Clement Greenberg carries this problem of perceptual time one step further. He says that fine art needs a "second remove."[19] In other words it takes time to appreciate art. At first impression a work of art supplies plastic values. These are formative images that may or may not crystallize into recognition and intuition in the viewer's mind at a later time. This "time" is relative. It may be practically instantaneous or it may be measured in terms of hours, days or months. This argument says that the ultimate

values or experiences in a work of art are only realized through extended consideration, and the more involved the construction, the more time is needed in perception.

Advertising art has to make due without the luxury of extended time. While fine art can rely on the "second remove," advertising art must live or die in the world of first glance. If the advertising artist does not hold the viewer after the initial attraction, he will not be given a second chance. Although advertisements will no doubt be repeated,[20] they are not designed to offer the viewer a new, undiscovered pleasure in a second viewing. The advertising artist has to create an artifact that is a totality in both space and time, and the simple art of grouping is the most useful method he has to achieve that goal.

But Greenberg's theory is really used to support the modern artist's movement away from the world of the representational to the world of the abstract. Indeed, abstract art requires a "second remove." The abstract artist says that ours is the era of the art of the mind. Art that used to represent physical objects, art that used to attempt to make the spiritual real, rather than vice versa, has been replaced by an approach that says that art is a product of mental reordering, both the artist's and the viewer's.

The abstract artist still may apply the concept of grouping, yet when he does, it is often a grouping of culturally unrecognizable images. But the advertising artist cannot rely upon art taking shape away from the artifact in the viewer's mind. Involved visual fields, opaque images and indistinct forms, while they may be provocative and could stir the intellect and emotions, probably would have a lower perceptual response if displayed through a mass medium. While one of Jackson Pollock's compositions can be seen against a white wall and can be perceived with mental reordering, it would look like visual interference or "snow" on television.

When advertisements can succeed as fine art

While much abstract art often seeks to depict a world of disintegration, advertising art is an art of integration. It achieves this integration by grouping common, shared and immediately understood images from culture, like Michelangelo depicted the relationship between God and man on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Although grand in its scope, Michelangelo's fresco is simple in its composition. There is one center of interest and all visual vectors are trained on the grouping of one finger, representing the spiritual, breathlessly close to another finger, representing the temporal. In that integrated, representational imagery, Fifteenth Century man intuitively understood Michelangelo's vision of human grace.

Similarly, advertising art can succeed as fine art when it trains its focus on the fundamental cultural links within groups of people and market segments, no matter how large the groups. In fact, when advertising art succeeds as Art, it is often when it speaks to the very largest, undifferentiated audiences, because the larger the audience size and target market, the more fundamental and simple must be the cultural grouping.

Consider Time magazine's "free space to art directors" promotion in 1969 and 1970. For fifty weeks Time offered a full page and a full column on the facing page to advertising agencies. The object was to allow advertising agencies the chance to exercise their persuasive talents on any subject, no matter how controversial, as long as it was not a product. In that series magazine advertising art stirred both our emotions and intellects. The series spoke to the broadest audience possible, all Americans, at least those who read Time, and offered us provocative, persuasive viewpoints on anything from patriotism to racial equality to the artistic process itself. Correspondingly, the visual images were fundamental and consisted of only a few visual points in the groupings—

an American flag distressed and flying upside down; two blind children, one black and one white, entwined in each other's arms; and a blank magazine page, symbolizing the frightening nothing from which a writer must give birth to something.

While the images must be plain and simple, the message need not be shallow or two-dimensional. The simple art of grouping does not mean that. In television advertising the Kodak "times of your life" campaign, Coca-Cola's "the real thing" promotion, and Bell Telephone's "reach out and touch someone" series of advertisements are examples of fine art or Art in advertising. They are not cheap thrills. If they were, the effects would perish quickly with their repetition.

Certainly, these three advertising campaigns speak to very large, seemingly general audiences. Why, then, are they not vapid and empty of emotional and intellectual substance? The groupings are simple--one, two or three representative models from the target market gathered around a telephone, a soda bottle or each other. But beyond the visual simplicity, these campaigns have structural themes that provide a human complexity, as well as the highest production values possible. Kodak asks us to deal with the concept of mortality and the desire to try to arrest the cycle of living and dying. Coca-Cola suggests that "experience" is a philosophical alternative to the materialism and conspicuous consumption that leave us discontented. Bell Telephone runs counter to the precepts of the so-called "me generation" and provides support and encouragement for love and human interaction when the world seems barren of human warmth and extension. Of course, all three campaign slogans also are cannily designed to reach the large, target markets that try to stop life and record its passing with some medium, or that look for known quantities and historically validated foods instead of plasticized substitutes, or that remember people and wish to communicate with them as quickly and sensually as possible.

<u>The benefits of an aesthetic theory of advertising</u>

Carey defines communication and culture as a ritual that gives substance and meaning to acts. Schudson and Goffman, in turn, show how we are taught

to act in prescribed ways through advertising. All three classify advertising as an institution that is defined by the culture it serves. Carey, then, says that participation in the ritual of advertising allows the individual and society to order its experiences. In short, the work of Carey, Schudson and Goffman show us where we should begin our study of advertising.

An aesthetic theory of advertising offers us a method for beginning the study; it suggests how to begin. An aesthetic theory proceeds from the point that culture is ritualized communication and seeks to explain how that ritual is made real. It shows how the advertising artist conceives and executes his task, as well as how the consumer is invited to participate in the formalized ritual of capitalistic persuasion and consumption.

An aesthetic theory also allows us to incorporate the selling intention of advertising in our examination of a particular advertisement's artistic success. Intention forces a simple grouping at the larger marketing and segmenting level, as well as in the ordering of artistic elements within individual artifacts. An aesthetic theory enables us to use the principles of fine art—contrast, harmony, balance, proportion, movement and unity—to show how they can be employed to reveal genuine intellect and emotion within the environmental context of economic constraints that govern advertising. Simplicity now can be appreciated for its role in producing equilibrium in mass media. With an aesthetic theory we can evaluate how well the advertising artist groups and balances visual elements into a gestalt that not only delivers the proper audience, but is artistically strong enough to succeed in the competitive communication marketplace.

Finally, an aesthetic theory allows us to evaluate the universality of an advertising message for its target audience. Advertising art does reflect the world of the latter half of the Twentieth Century. For better or worse, advertising art is general culture. It proceeds from that universal reservoir. It

does not create it, nor is it part of a separate and unequal culture. It is a cultural tool of capitalism. Now, we can ask, "Does the grouping of an advertisement fundamentally deliver the essence, the core of culture that is borrowed and used to persuade?"

Advertising artists know that their charge is to be simple, and they usually are good at it. They understand that simple grouping is the most effective design method, for as Dewey said, "The artist above all other men embodies in himself the 'attitude of the perceiver' as he works."[21] Although advertising artists create simple art when they achieve their best, it is not art by the numbers. It is art for the numbers.

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[4]Erving Goffman, Gender Advertisements (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 84.

[5]James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," Communication 2 (December 1975), p. 6.

[6]Philip Kotler, Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, and Control, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), p. 197.

[7]Ibid., p. 19.

[8]Another valuable addition to the literature is Raymond Williams, Television: Technology and Cultural Form (New York: Schocken Books, 1974). Using the technology of television, Williams demonstrates the errors one can make if he follows the argument that communication is a cause of culture rather than an effect.

[9]Kotler, pp. 206-10.

[10]Rudolph Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 79-80.

[11]Rudolph Arnheim, Entropy and Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 25.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p. 49.

[14]Clement Greenberg, Art and Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 9-10.

[15]Goffman, p. 10.

[16]Raymond Williams, "The Magic System," New Left Review, no. 4 (July/August 1960), p. 27.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Art as Experience, quoted in Hugh Dalziel Duncan, "Society as Determined by Communication: Dewey's Theory of Art as Communication," Communication and Social Order (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 57.

[19]Greenberg, p. 15.

[20]Interestingly, Andy Warhol has explored this repetitive effect of mass advertising. In several of his works, he borrows the French approach to poster advertising and explores how a work, usually a self-portrait, is changed or magnified by the repeated patterning of itself.

[21]Art as Experience in Duncan, P. 65.